

rock out hard, love him soft by growup_thatbeautiful

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Summary:

Billy Hargrove is, by all means, a rockstar. He plays the songs, he writes the lyrics, he lives the life. That is, until he meets Steve Harrington.

Steve Harrington is an upcoming movie star, content with his life around friends. Until he meets Billy Hargrove.

Together, they make up Hollywood's new hottest couple, expected to last maybe weeks. Steve and Billy aren't ones to back away from a challenge.

rock out hard, love him soft

Author's Note:

okay, so fair warning, there are a lot of time skips back and forth. past will be italicized, and the present is normal font. All of the Interview is the present. confusing enough??

this idea came to me and i just immediately started writing it lol

just to be clear, this is the first part of the Interview with the Harrington-Hargroves series. The next part will be a different interview from Steve's pov, and the third one will be a shorter one where they're together.

"Today we have something extra special. If you don't know who he is, I have no clue what you've been listening to for the past week and a half. Introducing rock icon and legend, Billy Hargrove!"

"Thanks, K. I've got a lot to live up to from that intro, huh?" Billy puts on his most charming smile, sets his posture just right to make it look like he's relaxed, places his hands spread wide on his thighs.

"Nothing you can't handle, I'm sure." She's a natural at this, bouncing back from his smart comments with ease, digging into the right spots to make him seem humane and relatable.

"Here's to hoping." Apart from his cool act, Billy does get pretty nervous before this type of thing. It's not his wheelhouse, if he's honest, it's nowhere near his wheelhouse. He knows that the next thing she's going to do is give the viewers a short summary about him, pre-approved, of course.

"Billy here is one of the biggest singer-songwriters of our current world. His new album, *Stranger Things*, has been on the top charts ever since it came out. Now, Billy, you've gained a lot of stardom as, not only a singer, but a true, old-fashioned rockstar. And, by that, I'm

referring to your eccentric lifestyle.”

“Who could forget the trip to Paris. Or the various misadventures around New York, for that matter,” he says with his best smirk.

“Both of which I don’t think we can talk about for, uh, viewer consideration. Let’s just say that our guest will not have to worry about finding a place to stay.”

“Definitely,” agrees Billy.

“Has your life dialed down a lot since your marriage to actor Steve Harrington? More domestic, maybe?” The question makes him frown slightly, but he’s quick to cover it up.

“I would really say that. That’s not the kind of people Steve and I agreed to be when we got married, not that there’s anything wrong with settling down. No, I would say we’re both planning on living the same way, just with a few new rules.”

“So kids are a no for the two of you?” There’s no judgment behind her tone, only a reporter’s curiosity.

“Not anytime soon. We figured the people who think that we have to have kids in order to be an important part of society are already pissed enough that two men got married.”

“Fair enough. So, I have to ask the burning question. The last song on your album, skateboard, what’s it about?”

“It’s about my younger sister, Max. I wasn’t always the best to her. Actually, let me rephrase that. There’s no need to sugarcoat it now. I was terrible to her. There are a million reasons that I could give for it. My dad, her step-dad, was an abusive piece of shit, not that she could control or change that. He hated a lot of things about me, while simultaneously not giving a shit what happened to me, as long as I picked Max up from school on time. Once we moved to Indiana, I kind of resented her for it, even though it was mostly my fault, which she would hate me saying. But we were able to patch things up eventually. One of the lines I wrote kind of shows that reluctant-yet-fierce sibling bond, “i’ll be gone from his blinding blows, don’t let

him take it out on you. if he does, i'm coming home to take the fire.” Maybe it's a little more than he means to share with her, but it doesn't really matter. Max gave him permission ages ago to talk more about their past, he's just never taken the offer. It only seems appropriate now, though.

“I'm very sorry to hear that. What changed between you two or what caused you to change?”

“Well, it was kind of two things. Oddly enough, when I moved away to L.A. we got closer. Something about the distance made me more approachable, made her more sincere, not that she ever wasn't. She would text me the stupid shit our parents were doing or saying, I would ask her opinion on song lyrics. Then she moved to New York and got this really great group of friends. Who, admittedly, I didn't originally approve of, but I'm glad to say they're good for her, even if they are a pain in my ass sometimes. They helped her a lot, most of the time when I should've been the one to help her. They're the ones who introduced me and Steve, too. I'm sorry, those were two long winded answers in a row.”

“No problem at all.” A simple statement said with a comforting smile.

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*“Billy, this is Steve, Dustin's...friend? I don't know and I'm scared to ask. Steve, this is Billy, my brother.” They're all meeting up at the amusement park, it being El's turn to choose where they go.*

*The man standing beside his sister is stunning, and, for some reason, familiar to Billy. Brown hair that he wants to run his fingers through, big hazel eyes, a little bit taller than Billy. He's wearing absolutely outrageous sunglasses with his outfit. Which, Billy admits to himself, isn't as outrageous. A yellow and black checkered shirt, black jeans, ratty shoes that he makes look flawless, the asshole. Obviously it looks good on him, Billy can't think of anything that wouldn't, and he just met the man.*

*He's ripped out of his pleasant daydreams by someone punching his arm. Naturally, it's Lucas, Max's on again off again boyfriend. Not that he would ever tell them this, but he thinks they're pretty good together. They're both hotheaded, Max more so than Lucas, hence the on again off*

*again part. They seem totally enamored by each other when they're not fighting, though.*

*And Lucas isn't so bad. Present arm punching excluded. "Hey, Billy, you think about what we talked about?"*

*"You mean your most gracious offer to be in my latest video with your friends? Yeah, I thought about it."*

*"They're your friends too," says Max, pushing him forward towards the entrance.*

*"So? What decision did you come to? Don't leave us waiting."*

*"Well, I've got some stuff I'm working on right now, so if I decide any of its music video worthy, I'll let you know." His reply is met with cheers from all of the others, except Steve, who looks vaguely confused.*

*They split off into groups, agreeing to meet up around lunch to eat together and decide what rides they need to go on as a group. Billy was going to go with Max and Lucas, but he quickly realized that he would just be a thirds wheel, so he decided to go with Steve and, one of the only options not in between a couple. Steve was left by Dustin, who chose to go with Will instead, which was probably for the best because Will's plan had been to play third wheel with Nancy and Jonathan. Billy doesn't know them well, but they're nice enough.*

*"So, Steve, what's a pretty boy like you doing, hanging around these kids?" They make their way to one of the thrill rides, Steve leading the two of them.*

*"You're around these kids too," points out Steve, which, yeah okay fair response.*

*"Yeah, but I'm obligated as a relative. You don't seem like you're related to Dustin. You can't tell me you're here of free will?"*

*"Actually, I am. Unlike you I enjoy the company of these idiots." They get in line for a ride with tons of loops that Billy's looking forward to.*

*"I wouldn't say I don't enjoy it. I think the right term would be to begrudgingly enjoy their company."*

*"Sure. Have you been on this one before?" asks Steve, motioning towards the coaster as they're getting closer to the beginning.*

*"Nope. Have you?" Billy leans against the concrete barrier, resting his elbows on the edge. He knows that it makes him look good, so what? It can't hurt.*

*"Yeah, once for work. Fair warning, last time I threw up." Billy raises his eyebrows and tries not to grimace.*

*"Thanks for warning me, I guess. What do you do? For work, I mean."*

*Steve laughs lightly, running a hand across the back of his neck. "Uh, I'm actually an actor." It hits Billy why he thought Steve looked familiar.*

*"Holy shit, dude, you were Oscar nominated last year. For Scoops with that Robin chick, right? Fuck, I knew I recognized you."*

*"Yeah, that was me. Don't go all crazy on me though, I was just starting to like you."*

*"Just starting? I'm instantly likeable to most people. I'll have to work extra hard on you then."*

*"You just might."*

*Turns out, Billy does not, in fact, have to work hard at all to win Steve over. Everything between them feels easier than anything Billy's ever had with someone else before. Before he knows it, it's been weeks and they're all over the papers.*

*For the first week they kept it a secret. Billy honestly didn't know if Steve was out to the world, and he didn't want to push it. Billy had been out since his first album, when the press noticed the place he went and the people he fucked. Steve seemed entirely comfortable with Billy out in public, though, so he left it to Steve to make the first move. He figured it would be something small, something that might make the second page. A hand hold, a fancy dinner. Things that friends could do together.*

*It was not. Steve took it upon himself, much to Billy's delight, to plan a romantic outing through L.A (they had been traveling back and forth from there and New York. Billy didn't really have anything to do, he was*

working on his new album and most places left him alone.) In glorious Steve fashion, the date went terribly. First, they were interrupted midway through their dinner because Steve caught his sleeve on fire. If that wasn't enough, Billy accidentally jammed his finger in a doorway, causing quite the commotion in the ice-cream shop.

Steve's genius disaster had come in handy. People started taking notice of them, whether it be their cussing out of doors and candles, or loud laughter at said cussing out. A few fans came up and asked for photos, which they were happy to take. That, of course, didn't go unnoticed by the press either. When they were found huddling under Steve's apartment awning, because naturally it had rained, the press went crazy, snapping photos of two of their biggest stars cuddling up on the stone stairs.

That's really when Billy started writing his new album. Sure, he had been saying that it was in the works for a while, but he only had vague ideas of vague ideas. With Steve, though, he was able to write songs faster than he ever had before. Some of his best works were written with Steve asleep on the couch, curled up under a blanket, Billy humming some new tune and frantically typing into the notes app.

Steve was always the first person to hear his songs, whether or not they were about him, or if they were finished, or if they were just half of a chorus.

Surprisingly, Steve had a way with words too. He helped Billy with melodies he'd been trying to figure out for months. Like everything else, it was easy. Writing songs together was such an incredible experience, and Billy knows that, with Steve, it's the most lyrically advanced he's ever been. Suddenly it's like he's exposed to a whole new genre of music and writing that had been previously unknown to him.

It's fucking awesome. By the time they finish the album, Billy is ready to get down on a knee, and they've only been together for three months. Apparently Steve is on the same page, because when Billy does ask him to marry him, Steve simply runs up the stairs and grabs the engagement ring that he got for Billy. Maybe it's just the Hollywood buzz, but it didn't feel like too much too fast. It just felt right.

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"I would be a terrible interviewer if I didn't ask you about the, rather public take down of your drummer Tommy Hagen. Care to explain a little more what happened there?"

"I don't blame you for asking. I'm not sure the answer is going to be that interesting, though. It was simple. He said something stupid, I put him in his place. No real story behind it."

"Did he insult your music or lyrics? Maybe your impeccable sense of fashion?" She's giving him an easy out here, but Billy's not in the habit of making this easier for himself.

"No. I don't expect everyone to like my music. I'm obviously not saying anything at all if it doesn't piss a few people off. Frankly, he made some comments about me and Steve that I couldn't stand by and take. I've had enough people telling me who I am is wrong, I don't need it from my band mates."

"Tommy is still in your band, though, isn't he?" Ah, there it is. A question that can easily trap him. Luckily, he has a boyfriend who prepares him for this stuff.

"Yeah. I honestly believe that he didn't mean anything malicious or cruel with what he said, he just didn't know that it was hurtful. I think he can learn from that and be more careful in the future. I'm just happy it was me and not some poor, undeserving fan. Most people don't realize how harmful things they say can be. Plus, Tommy's an idiot. He never has meaning behind anything he says."

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*Billy feels terrible. Logically, he knows that this was one of the milder lash-outs he's had. But this was in front of Steve, and it was aimed at someone he trusted.*

*Steve hasn't spoken to him since they got in the car and drove away. Away from the hurt and anger and, most importantly, the flashing cameras. Billy's hands are shaking, and he's having trouble focusing on*



*the road. He should've asked Steve to drive. But maybe asking Steve to do something for him isn't okay right now? He has no clue.*

*"Billy." Part of him recognizes that Steve's been saying his name. He shakes his head, trying to clear the fog and listen to Steve, blinking wildly. Not knowing what else to do, he pulls over to the side of the road where it's safer. Safe. Safe is Steve's eyes, an inner voice supplies helpfully. So, he looks at Steve.*

*Steve looks worried, and, no, Billy can't have that. He tries to say some words of comfort, something to fix that crease above Steve's eyes, but nothing comes out except a pained noise that he had no intention of letting out.*

*Billy hates to admit it, but he's scared. Suddenly he feels like he can't breathe, and the car is too small. Or too big? It all feels wrong.*

*Steve's voice fades into his conscience. "Billy, hey, you're fine, baby, just breathe. You can do that for me, yeah? It's okay, I've got you." Over time, maybe minutes maybe hours, Billy calms down enough to be completely mortified about what just happened. Sure, Steve's seen him cry and freak out, but those had all been Billy's choice to a certain degree. This, though? This was new.*

*"Hey, Billy, can you look at me, baby?" Steve's finger is under his chin, tilting his head gently to look at Steve. For some reason it makes him want to cry even more.*

*"I'm going to get out of the car, okay?" Billy doesn't do it on purpose, but a mournful sound leaves him. The only thing worse than whatever's happening right now is going through this without Steve. His vision blurs as he shakes his head frantically.*

*"I'm not leaving, love. I'm just going to move us to the backseat." Steve's true to his word, like he usually is. If Billy wasn't so scared Steve would realize how stupid he's being, Billy would be absolutely mortified.*

*Steve sits him down. wrapping his arms around him, pulling Billy into his neck. Unsurprisingly, it helps. Steve seems to know what he's doing, so Billy listens when Steve tells him to take deep breaths, relax his hands (he*

has crescent shaped marks from his nails), and focus on Steve's voice.

When he's calm enough, he asks what the fuck just happened in a voice softer than he expected. "You had a panic attack. Don't worry, it's not super serious. I had loads of them in high-school. I still have them sometimes, actually. You're fine, though. Probably just shaken by the whole Tommy thing." Steve's voice tightens at the mention of Tommy's name, and Billy sits up, surprising Steve and banging his chin.

"Shit, Steve, I'm sorry. I'm so sorry."

"I assume you're not talking about my chin?" asks Steve with a grin, one that quickly falls when he sees Billy's serious expression. "It really doesn't hurt, Bill. I'll be fine," he says earnestly.

"No, not that. Well, yes that, but also about earlier. I got mad, madder than I have in a while, and I was embarrassed and I didn't want you to think I just let him get away with shit like that. I didn't mean to yell, I'm not always like that."

"Bullshit," says Steve, before Billy can get any more out. "Billy, I knew what I was getting into when we started dating. Off the top of my head, I can already come up with at least 20 times when you've gotten angry at stupid, homophobic people. I would be more surprised if you didn't do anything. And, before you ask, no, it doesn't bother me. As long as it's not me you're yelling like that."

They stay in the backseat of the car for a few minutes, breathing in the silence. Steve drives them home, and they watch *Clueless*. Steve pretends like he doesn't think it's hilarious that Billy's guilty pleasure movie is *fucking clueless*.

Billy writes one of his songs about it. <i>

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"Billy, your new album is very different from anything you've put out in the past. Care to tell us about that change?"

"Yeah, of course. I guess a lot of it was the environment that I was writing in changed a lot. I was forming better relationships that I could write about, and I was able, with help from others, to put some of my older

poems into songs. I definitely went out of my comfort zone a lot, but Steve was there to help me through it all. It was one of the best experiences of my life, which is outstanding because it was over the span of, like, three months.”

“Tell us about some of the different styles or techniques you used in *Stranger Things*.”

“I would love to. It’s fairly obvious what I did on some, like slowing the tempo and volume of everything but my voice on *Lifeguard* and *Empty Bed*. In my more usual sounding pieces I experimented a lot with more unique sounds that you wouldn’t normally hear, mostly in order to get the right emotions across, because at the end of the day that’s what this album was and is really about.”

“I also got to use different levels of sound to make them more complex, such as the minor guitar riff you can hear in *Fuck a Candelit Dinner*, the rather intense drumming in *The Arcade*, and the electric piano section of *Bedsheet Secrets*.”

“I wanted to ask you about that song, actually. It was distinctly more electronic and edited than anything else on the album.”

“Yeah, I kind of really gave a lot of myself into that one, and, like I said earlier, everything I did with the songs I did on purpose. *Bedsheet Secrets* specifically focuses on having someone to share your fears with, and that was new to me, so I added something in the song that tries to reflect that on edge but relaxed feeling.”

“I have to say, those answers were a lot deeper and a lot more coherent than what I expected. You, Billy Hargrove, are full of surprises.

“To most people’s surprise, I’m not actually an asshole. I know I give off an asshole vibe, and I’d like to clear the air.”

“Is this self-proclaimed or..?”

Billy gives his best laugh, shaking his head. “No, I just know my husband wouldn’t stay with me if I was.”

“I assume, of course, that you’re talking about Steve?” She turns to the camera in between them. “I’d like to talk a little more about that

relationship, if that's alright. Now, a lot of your relationship has been public. Tell us a little about that."

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"Billy, come see this. Someone made a completion of all our cutest moments. It's really ruining your careless and mysterious aura. You should really cause some more drama." Steve's laying on the couch, one leg thrown over the side and the other on the floor. Because he wants Billy to have a heart attack apparently.

"I'll do what I can, pretty boy. You want me to yell at you about that new lobby boy. Oh, or maybe you're not spending enough time at home with me. That'll keep them busy, doncha' think?"

"I should hope so. I guess cute coupley things aren't front page worthy. No more midnight trips to the ice-cream section at CVS, then."

"Hey now, bambi, I wouldn't sound so sure." Last time they did that, they had done one of those instagram live videos, and it had gone about as well as either of them thought it would. There are videos all over the internet now of them having a jumping contest, judged by the people in the stream. Billy still thinks he won, and blames the loss on Steve's inch taller than him.

That contest was immediately followed by requests for former challenges, which they obliged from the safety of their apartment. Billy won the staring contest, the best handstand contest, and the drinking contest. (Steve should've known better than to go against Billy drinking.) Steve won the best drawing (they're both shit at drawing), the longest breath holding (which Billy is so going to use against him), and the worst cook contest. Both of them are always happy to do things for fans. If he's being honest, Billy is impressed that there are people paying attention to him at all.

A week later Steve makes him get social media apps, something he had stayed away from until now. He doesn't have anything again at them, he just doesn't know what people would want from him on that. Turns out it doesn't matter what he posts, people are going to freak out anyway. Half of his posts are of him and Steve, and the others are completely random ones that he likes to see fans try and decipher.

They joke a lot about how the cutest pictures of them are the ones taken by the press when they don't know. Billy hardly ever takes pictures, and Steve's phone is almost always dead or missing for one reason or another, so it's nice to have some proof that they're actually alive sometimes.

Of course, there are times when rumors and articles come out that are less than flattering towards them. Ninety-nine percent of the time they're far from the truth, and all it takes is a phone call or text to clear the air, but it makes things hard. Billy wouldn't change any of it, no, but it can wear on him a little when Steve's out of town for a job, not that it's Steve's fault. Billy's always happy when Steve gets jobs because of how excited Steve gets.

They're good at the long distance thing. Sure, sometimes it's frustrating when the time difference doesn't work out or they keep missing each other's phone calls, but they're careful to let each other know when it's too much. It helps them avoid a lot of unnecessary arguments. It's only made more perfect when they get to travel together.

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*"Well, Billy, it was a pleasure to get to listen to you, and I can't wait until I get to do this again."*

*"The pleasure was all mine." Billy smiles at her then at the camera. He gets out of the seat, stretching and walking over to the other side of the camera, thanking all the people there and grabbing his coat and keys. Waving goodbye and double checking that he doesn't have anything else that he needs to do, he gets into the car.*

*On the way to their apartment, Billy stops at Steve's favorite pizza place, picking up enough to feed an army, which is basically how many people they're having over tonight. It started out as a smaller movie night, but the list kept getting longer and longer. Steve was no help, not having the sense to say no.*

*Steve isn't home yet. Billy sets the pizzas down on the counter, setting up their movie room with blankets and popcorn. It's one of Billy's favorite rooms in the apartment, although that isn't saying much. He's had it since*

before Steve, but with Steve he's been able to personalize it a lot more. Because his paycheck allows it, it's on the top floor and had a huge balcony that Steve hates going out when it's windy. The floor plan is open and full of windows overlooking the city. It's one of the only places that feels like home.

He hears the click of the door opening, and Steve calling a mix of his name and "where the fuck are you, Hargrove."

"Come on, that's no way to greet your husband, Harrington." He flicks Steve with his finger.

"I'll greet you however I fucking please." Steve's words are spoken with a hint of an edge, punctuated with a kiss.

Groups start arriving quickly, mostly in pairs. Billy and Steve were very clear that no one should dress up, and encouraged people to wear whatever they wanted. Billy himself is wearing sweatpants and one of Steve's sweaters, not that Steve would notice it missing. He swears half of their closet is filled with the things. Steve's wearing pajama pants and a ratty t-shirt that Billy's been begging him to get rid of.

For once, everybody listened and is wearing various comfort clothes. Chaos ensues as pizza is served and popcorn is burned a few times and blame is passed on false accusations. (It was Steve, but Billy passes the blame to Max, who promptly gives him the finger and goes back to eating her pizza.)

After only a few spills and fights, they all pile up together in the media room, and vote on a movie. The winner turns out to be *Zoolander*, and the losers pretend to be mad.

The movie starts, and, predictably, Billy settles into Steve's armchair, squished together but not uncomfortable. Max and Lucas are in a similar position, and Billy takes it upon himself to whisper to Lucas not to try any funny business, knowing that Lucas wouldn't do that anyway. Smartly, Lucas replied that he won't if Billy doesn't. Kid hangs around Steve too much, but no one asks Billy what he thinks.

Well, no one except Steve. Unable to repress the urge, Billy kisses whatever part of Steve is closest to him and whispers words he hasn't said

*to many people at all, but says to Steve daily like a prayer.*

*"I love you."*

**Author's Note:**

kudos and comments very appreciated!! visit here (<https://growup-thatbeautiful.tumblr.com/post/658092490708140032/my-new-harringrove-fic-rock-out-hard-love-him>) to see Billy's album cover and song list.